

Frank Ernest Hill and Pitts Sanborn have been elected acting editors for the winter term

THE MEASURE

A JOURNAL OF POETRY



Poems by Joseph Auslander, Louise Bogan, Hans Trausil, Babette Deutsch, Charles R. Murphy, Amy Murray, Bennett Weaver and Others — —

Reviews by Padraic Colum and Robert Hillyer —

“The Dynasty of Things” — — by Carolyn Hall

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Announcement

Because of a prospective indefinite absence from New York, Agnes Kendrick Gray is resigning from the board of editors of *The Measure*, her resignation to go into effect with the publication of this issue.

The Measure

A Journal of Poetry

Number 9

November, 1921

Messenger at Dusk

AGAINST the warm green reticence
Of dusk, the drowsy parliaments
Of leaves, a fragile spirit brings
His voice, his wings.

The purport of the stars is in
His breast: he is their paladin;
His lonely cadence flashes white
Before the night.

No stealthy shadows can suppress
That bird's triumphant wistfulness:
He has the starlight to rejoice
His wings, his voice.

To-Night

TO-NIGHT the moon is bannering
A black tree, and through the dark
Some vague inevitable wing
To-night

Flaps in a blinding swarthy arc
Across the moon . . . blind . . . shivering;
One star burns dully like the spark

Of death's last candle guttering
In sunken gold; and words blurt stark
To your chilled lips and there they cling
To-night.

Your Hands, Your Hair

YOUR hands go breathing over me,
A warm breath follows them:
Christ in His agony
Knew how tender hands can be—
Christ on His Tree,
Christ in Bethlehem.

Your hair shadows my blood-beat
Cool as cyclamen:
Christ in His winding-sheet
Remembered hair against His feet
Bitterly and blindly sweet . . .
Oh the hair of Magdalen!

Last Song

I WILL blow my last song to the moon's dingy door
Hastily sealed; I will blow my song through the slit,
Through the cobwebbed crevice between the door and the floor
Where hairy old moon-spider grandmothers nod and knit
I will blow my last song.

Then some night when the wind rustles velvety thick
With moist yellow jasmin-stars, and the smell of rain
Drifts an impatient silver, the door will click
Dreamily ajar, and misty with moon-spider skein
My last song will blow down.

Joseph Auslander

Survival

I HOPED that you would die out from me
With the year.
Between you and my heart I thrust
The glittering seasons.

I denied you with late summer,
Watching the green-white hydrangea change
To petalled balls of thin and ashen blue,
And nasturtiums, hot orange on stems like ice or glass
Shriveling by round leaves.

I went on to autumn
Without you,
Seeing hills burdened by trees colored unevenly:
Applered, pearyellow,
And leaves falling in ravines, through bitter smoke,
Falling indirectly,
A long waver and turn.
Those evenings came
High and shining over rivers like quicksilver;
And latest autumn:
The underbrush sienna, cut, twisted, carved,
Red berries shaken through it like beads
Scattered in barbaric hair.

Nothing moves in the fields that once had the grass.
To look upon the fields
Is like silence laid upon the eyes.
The house is shut sternly
From limitless radiance outside
In these days of afternoon stars.

The year dies out.
Who are you to be stronger than the year?
I have you like long cold sunshine in an empty room,
Through and beyond black thaws that rot the snow.

Louise Bogan

Summer Morning

IN the morning steadily
I walk down the lawn.
I thrust my bare feet through the dew
Happy I was born.

The quiet is a crystal cup
That splinters when the birds are up. . . .

Autumn Signs

BEFORE I even knew
The blossoms died,
The trucks came rumbling down
Bulging barrels at the side,
In which the apples ride.

They should float apples down the river
That men might recognize the Giver. . . .

Charles A. Wagner

The Loon Bill

WAVE-DRIVEN in the wet shore sand
I found and took within my hand
A loon bill. It had bit the land

And was a casket to the grain
Which makes the iris live again
Where the wave bursts with copper stain.

I stood to view the gem-scoured thing
Which had been borne on phantom wing
Where other birds would never sing,

Which had been trumpet to the note
Of mystery from a lone throat:
And now—the cask of the sea's spent groat.

How strangely wandering we find
The upstarting symbol of a mind
Which calls unto his far off kind
From the working deeps of storm and wind!

The sea came bloated with dead sound;
The bark moats heaved to turn around;
A wraith fog lifted from the reedy ground.

And overhead a mew went by,
Ghoul-white against a phosphor sky:
Her throat was stopped, she could not cry.

*Piteous, piteous gem-scoured thing,
Burdened with sand, how would you sing
Were you hurling the mist from your phantom wing!*

And you, my heart, when the sea mists rise
And go about your brother's eyes,
Tho he has made you a lone strange thing,
An exile hidden in mystery,
Will you not give him yourself from the sea
With glad, swift, terrible cries?

What is yours but to call to the land
The thing that he could not understand?
To give him back for his banishment
The secret truth of a far content?

Till the wings break where the flight is long,
And the tides come hurling and full and strong!
Bennett Weaver

The Island

OF all who are encircled by the flood,
I am the most deeply beloved:
For a thousand days I listen to the sea
And the passion of its surf
That breaks over me in a thousand songs.

Of all who are encircled by the flood,
I am the most deeply lonely:
For a thousand nights I listen
To the mists and silent moons
That rise about me in a thousand dreams.

Hans Trausil

Songs of A Lover

VENARY

THE night has hunted down the stars.
And the white body of the moon
Lies overthrown.
Night is a hunter and you are his spear.
I look upon the stars that one by one
Are still.
Upon the thunder-shaken hill I hear
His arrowy feet.
Who is taken
Now? Ah, Night
Ah, naked spear. . . .

ENIGMA

BEAUTY is older than the jungle night,
And shall we then pretend
This moment, with its bitter, sharp delight,
Is beauty's end?

Though wars endure, and only men must die,
Shall this dear, married flesh
By its irresolute credulity
Be warmed afresh?

Once more despair's immortal throat is pressed
By fingers love makes rough.
Oh, is strong thigh and shoulder, brow and breast
Not shield enough?

Babette Deutsch

Fulfilment

A MAN'S cool breath across a woman's breasts!
How, with brush or word, its beauty shown?
Across the mountain-tops the mist is blown.

Are the mountains sentient and may thrill
when over them the breezes drag the wraith—
with coolness of the off-sea wind; not chill
but soothing to their loneliness and thirst?

The rhythms break in faint and subtle glimmer.
The touch of joy? *Night scent off iris fields;*
thin waves of starlight glancing in snow-shimmer.
To his brow's pressure now the white drift yields.

Is any fact of nature might be sweeter?
A babe's cheek there, perhaps; I do not know:
the green, strong ebb and flow in ocean's metre,
the impulse makes the pale night flowers blow?

A man's slow breath across a woman's breasts;
thought subtly going between far-off friends;
and trail the mountain cloud's uneven ends.

Helen West Heller

Lamplight

IT is warm in the yellow light
Of the lamp;
And my thoughts turn round and round. . . .
Round and round. . . .
In the circle of the yellow light
Of the lamp;
Though my room like a shell holds the sound
Of the brook that whispers on. . . .
Still and on. . . .
"Release . . . release."

Cool and damp
And misty is it out here in the night;
But the moon hangs high and bright
Above the meadow;
And the trees above the mist are black
Against the moon;
And the snow-berries patch the dark bush,
Softly white;
Though the bush is one with its own shadow,
As its shadow with the ground;
And the brook out of sight
Lisps, "Release,"
In the hush
Of the night
Without cease.

And still I wander back
Into the yellow light
Of the lamp;
And again my thoughts go round. . . .
Round and round. . . .
In the circle of the yellow light
Of the lamp:
I have found
No release.

Gusty Night

MY fire gnaws at the bones of my poor trees,
And licks its lips and purrs, as who should say,
"Aha!—

So there's an end to apples and to cherries!"
The heavy-hoofed wind tramples on the highroads of
the air.

Just Dodder

IT must be a lonesome thing—
The soul of a wild worthless weed
In the skin of a slim girl.

Thrums . . .
Orange-yellow thrums:
The Great Weaver-Woman has flung out her lapful
Here amongst the jewel-weed
Along the brook.

Ask your neighbor what he calls it, and he'll say,
"Oh, *that's* just *dodder!*"

Just a weed
That's good neither for food nor for fodder:
Pretty stuff. . . .
Pull it, and you'll get sore fingers
Like enough.

Well . . . why blame the dodder?

It must be a lonesome thing—
The soul of a wild worthless weed
In the skin of a slim girl.

"The girls don't come to see me," you complain to me;
And tears are in your long pale narrow eyes:
Yes,—and next you'll be complaining to some other one
That I don't come to see you. . . .

Slim girl with the long pale narrow eyes,
Who's to bid you go and sin no more?
Or who's to deal with you as was commanded
By Moses in the Law?
Got by a dotard
On a mother that's no better than she should be,
What should *you* be (even if you would be)
Than another bit of the Great Weaver-Woman's wastry?
Little ill-will in you,
Little good-will,
Little wit—
Just dodder.

It must be a lonesome thing—
The soul of a wild worthless weed
In the skin of a slim girl.

Amy Murray

Bald 'The' at the Play

WALKING through deep silence
Weary over darkening wheat-fields
Saddened with setting many sheaves
We came upon bald 'The',
Old Theodore at the play.

Straw-stacks bronzed and sunken,
Blown in a ring against the firing
Of a bubble sun halved on the knife-edged prairie,
Closed in his stage with voluminous curtaining.
In his swart face with the dawn
And departure of proud laughter and tears
Came, as we saw, and passed,
Tragedy, veiled and thunder-throated,
Titanic griefs, interspersed
With Titania's magic merrymaking,
White-armed mockery forever
Followed by the wounding of stricken kings.

High on the broken seat
Of the binder rusting into earth,
Stock upright, torn, expectant,
Moved now to an ecstasy of weeping,
Now trembling into applause,
Bald The', mad The', in the spell of the long shadows,
Envisioned his masquerade.

Maxwell Anderson

Unavailing

R ISE up, great fields, in surging hills of grain,
Rise up around me like the mountainy sea,
Bear down on me, a mighty moving main,
Roll up your waves of wheat to smother me.

Come, corn and barley, oats and silver rye,
Color of sand, heavy with misted green,
Millions of spired stems to hold you high,
Close me about in haze of noon's hot sheen.

Though your fullblown horizons swell and shake,
Though you surround me, swallow me entire,
You never can prevail with me, nor make
My body quicken with your fertile fire;

For I have not been covered by the sun,
Nor by warm rain is life in me begun.

Elisabeth Wilkins Thomas

To A Certain Imagist

FOR you have uttered coins that will not ring;
The superscription's there but not the sound
Of gold with Caesar's head that men may fling
With an authentic vibrance on the ground,
Your images will blur as grinding time
Passes your counterfeits from hand to hand,
While gold of spirit, music, and of rhyme
Will pass forever current through the land.

Only the sovran dies of utter art
Can mill the golden discs of poetry
To pass the test of time's teeth in the mart,
Where there is bay for sale by artistry.
Art is a jealous prince who never gives
To clever coiners his prerogatives.

Hervey Allen

The Night Train

EACH night, at time of half-shut eyes, this train
Enters our sphere of silence and of pine
And down the lonely straightness of its line
Prolongs its mellow whistle; and again
More distant and more speechful, its refrain,
Like cry of beast, seeks distance and the fine
Ear of silent places—swamps whence shine
No life, and hope of answer is in vain.
A heavenly beast with beauty in its throat,
Put there by man but willed not to be so,
Conscious alone in rending this remote
Night of the silence where all gone things stay,
Flinging its challenge to the long-ago,
Yearning with dream-tired dreamers for the day.

Charles R. Murphy

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Associate Editors—Hervey Allen, Robert Hillyer and David Morton

ACTING EDITOR: LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

ASSISTANT EDITOR: AGNES KENDRICK GRAY

“The Dynasty of Things”

JOHN DOS PASSOS, writing in the *Freeman* about the Batum of since the war, said something which suggested a new reason to me why people have always insisted that art thrived on poverty. He said: “In the stamping and the abandon with which the two heroes fought was an atom of some untrammelled expression which might perhaps replace in people’s hopes and lives the ruined dynasty of Things.” Is it, then, the Things (by *Things* you must understand “possessions, portable objects, and personal effects”) following along in the train of plenty which choke the instinct of expression?

There is a little artists’ community not far from New York which is unconsciously working on this theory with inspiring results. I mean Mount Ivy, where Amy Murray lives, and Rollo Peters, and the Mowbray-Clarkes. In the beginning there were some hundred acres of land and a few very old, untouched farm houses. The first movement of the settlers was to sweep away the last remains of superfluity and dig down to the great, stone fire places which they found all covered up. Then with bare beauty of line to build on, the artists set to work. They worked with their own hands so that the joy of crafts came back in the intervals between creating art. They worked slowly, taking pains to perfect as they went. Now the houses are intensely satisfying with rare doors and stairways, to say nothing of the other high points of houses, and they have a sense of far deeper roots than one generally finds in this country.

Whether it is the absence of Things, to borrow Mr. Dos Passos’s word for application outside of Batum, that makes Mount Ivy really alive

to art, it is impossible to prove, but I think there is something in it. And Mount Ivy, whatever the reason, even goes so far as to be a meeting place, a working ground for poetry, drama, sculpture, painting and music. When I was there I saw some new dancing given by a Mr. and Mrs. Zoltan Hecht. They are a young couple who have had about as little of Things in their recent lives as it is possible to have; their dancing, or "visualized rhythm" as they call it, is a fusing of color, music, and movement in a groping for expression.

There are, of course, a few persons who are born with the conviction to be artists anyway, and anywhere, and it is not of them that I am thinking. What I wonder is whether the great mass of bottled-up people in this country might not be released to art if the Things in their parlors were gotten rid of? I can think of no more direct method of consummating the downfall here of the "Dynasty of Things," again to borrow from Mr. Dos Passos, than to bring about a renaissance of craft which would show up the futility of their machine-made objects.

Carolyn Hall

A Turning Tide?

Poems, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield & Company, New York.

STEWART MITCHELL'S *Poems* are the voice of that changing tide which has penetrated the shore of sensuous beauty and turns back toward the sea of mysticism. We catch passing glimpses of large emotion and positive thought, but just at that particular moment when their forms are softening and their profiles merging into something vaster and deeper.

The poems bring to mind figures seen through a fog; figures of gigantic stature and vague outline.

Mr. Mitchell's use of suggestion combined with the flow toward mysticism, has brought forth many poems of occult beauty, and, in every poem, single lines that startle one into dreaming. And one must also admit that there are occasional passages so incomprehensible as to seem like the compositions of a ouija-board. But the clarity of the technique redeems even the cloudiest passages, and invests their strange inarticulateness with a momentous, fantastic charm.

Such is the general impression. Individually, there are many poems which defy my category; such poignant love poems as "A Farewell"; such clear-cut sketches as "A Character" (no one could mistake the identity!); such thoughtful statements as "China."

From the point of view of technique, the volume is composed almost entirely of poems; there is very little "free verse," and most of that is metrical. The sonnets, the blank verse, the various stanza forms; all contribute a solid structure to the sincerity and depth of the thought. The verse suggests chords rather than melody. A few mannerisms and echoes mar an occasional line, but only one complete poem, the Swinburnian "Invocation."

Out of many selections, such as "Helen," which I should like to reprint, I shall choose

WARRIORS

Here, for the marvel of the crowd,
They put you as if death were proud
Of honour, and would cry aloud
 All that the vanished flesh has done.
Yet, facing some of us, you seem
To look on men as from a dream,
Careless of whether they should deem
 All that you died for, lost or won.
Pride, such as yours would scorn acclaim
Fawning your praise to gaudy fame,
Telling the story it were shame
 To look on you, and not surmise.
Would you from death, I wonder, dare
Once more to venture—even care?
You look—and fate lets fall her hair
 Over the answer in your eyes.

Robert Hillyer

Irish Poets

Irish Poets of To-day; An Anthology, compiled by L. D'O. Walters. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

IN one of the chapters in his subtle book *Decadence*, Remy De Gourmont suggests a function for the anthologist. "That Racine," he writes, "is a better poet than Tristan l'Hermite, and that *Iphegénie* is superior to *Marianne*, are two propositions which are equally untrue; for we might as well be asked to compare this, which is by Racine (he quotes from *L'Etang*) with this, which is by Tristan (he quotes from *Le Promenoir des Deux Amans*)." "I am well aware," he goes on, "that I am here comparing the best of Tristan with the worst of Racine; but all the same, if Racine had his park, Tristan had his garden, and it is often agreeable there. Let us then tear up the list of awards in order to remain ignorant of the fact that Tristan l'Hermite is a poet 'whose versification is ridiculous,' so that our pleasure in meeting with him may not thus be spoiled in advance, and so that, with him, we may dare address his muse.

*Fay moy boire au crux de tes mains,
Si l'eau n'en dissout point la neige."*

Remy De Gourmont is making protest against the judgments registered in all the histories of literatures. I suggest that it is the function of the Anthologist constantly to appeal against such judgments.

Does the history of literature say that so and so is the top poet of his country or of his century? The Anthologist may show that he agrees. But he may also bring forward a poem by one whom the history of literature describes as second rate and let it appear that it is equal in content of beauty to the poem by the accepted poet. The Anthologist should be an explorer as well as a compiler; he should go far afield; he should be able to surprise us by producing the solitary poem of a neglected poet or the overlooked verses of the poet who has become out-moded. The Anthologist has to give us accepted things. But he fails if he gives us only accepted things. He has to make his way between the Scylla of the accepted estimate and the Charybdis of personal whim.

The fault of *Irish Poets of To-day* as an Anthology is that it shows no faculty of exploration. It is purely a compilation. It indicates no exploration. An explorer in Irish Poetry of to-day would surely have discovered some of Francis Carlin's racy poems even though the poet lives this side of the Atlantic Ocean. An explorer in Irish poetry would surely have given us one or two of the Ranns made by the late Seumas O'Kelly, although Seumas O'Kelly had made himself noted for his beautiful prose. When Mrs. Walters turns from the accepted poets, from "A. E.," W. B. Yeats, Joseph Campbell, James Stephens and the others, she gives us in the poems of Patrick Chalmers, H. L. Doak, Isobel Hume, John Francis MacEntee, R. Rowley, only poems that are in a convention based either upon Anglo-Irish verbal expressions or reminiscences of Gaelic poetry known only at second hand. There are some surprising omissions in this collection. Joseph Campbell is represented only by a single poem, and that not one of his most virile poems; Thomas MacDonagh is represented only by a single poem—"To Eoghan" which is one of his least personal poems; Joseph Plunkett is represented only by a single poem. James Joyce is not represented at all. More surprising still, in an Anthology of Irish Poets of To-day a place has not been found for a single one of Alice Milligan's heroic poems. Perhaps the one discovery that is shown in this book is Patrick MacGill's rough but powerful "Dedication." Those who knew Patrick MacGill as an original prose writer and a derivative poet will be surprised how strong and personal this poem is.

Padraic Colum

Who the Contributors Are

JOSEPH AUSLANDER is a young American now living in London.

LOUISE BOGAN lives in New York.

BENNETT WEAVER teaches in the Department of English in the Michigan Agricultural College.

CHARLES A. WAGNER is a student at Columbia University, and is the editor of "The Morningside," college literary magazine.

HANS TRAUSIL, who now lives in New York, is the translator, with Jessie Lemont, of the poems of Rainer Maria Rilke, the Austrian poet, and the compiler and translator of an anthology of Irish Poetry in German.

BABETTE DEUTSCH, who is now Mrs. A. Yarmolinsky, is the author of "Banners," and co-author, with her husband, of the "Anthology of Russian Poetry."

AMY MURRAY, harpist and singer of Celtic songs, now makes her home in an ancient farm house which she has revitalized in Rockland County, New York.

CHARLES R. MURPHY lives in Rockport, Mass.

**STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC.,
REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF
THE MEASURE, A JOURNAL OF POETRY, PUBLISHED
MONTHLY, AT NEW YORK, N. Y., FOR OCTOBER 1, 1921.**

State of New York, }
County of New York, } ss:

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Carolyn Hall, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the business manager of The Measure, A Journal of Poetry, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher—Maxwell Anderson, Padraic Colum, Agnes Kendrick Gray, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, George O'Neill, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Louise Townsend Nicholl—449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Editor—Louise Townsend Nicholl—449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Managing Editor—None.

Business Manager—Carolyn Hall—449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of the total amount of stock.)

Maxwell Anderson, Padraic Colum, Agnes Kendrick Gray, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, George O'Neill, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Louise Townsend Nicholl—All at 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None.

CAROLYN HALL, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1921.

James W. Jennings.

(My commission expires March 30, 1923.)

The Measure

A Journal of Poetry

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